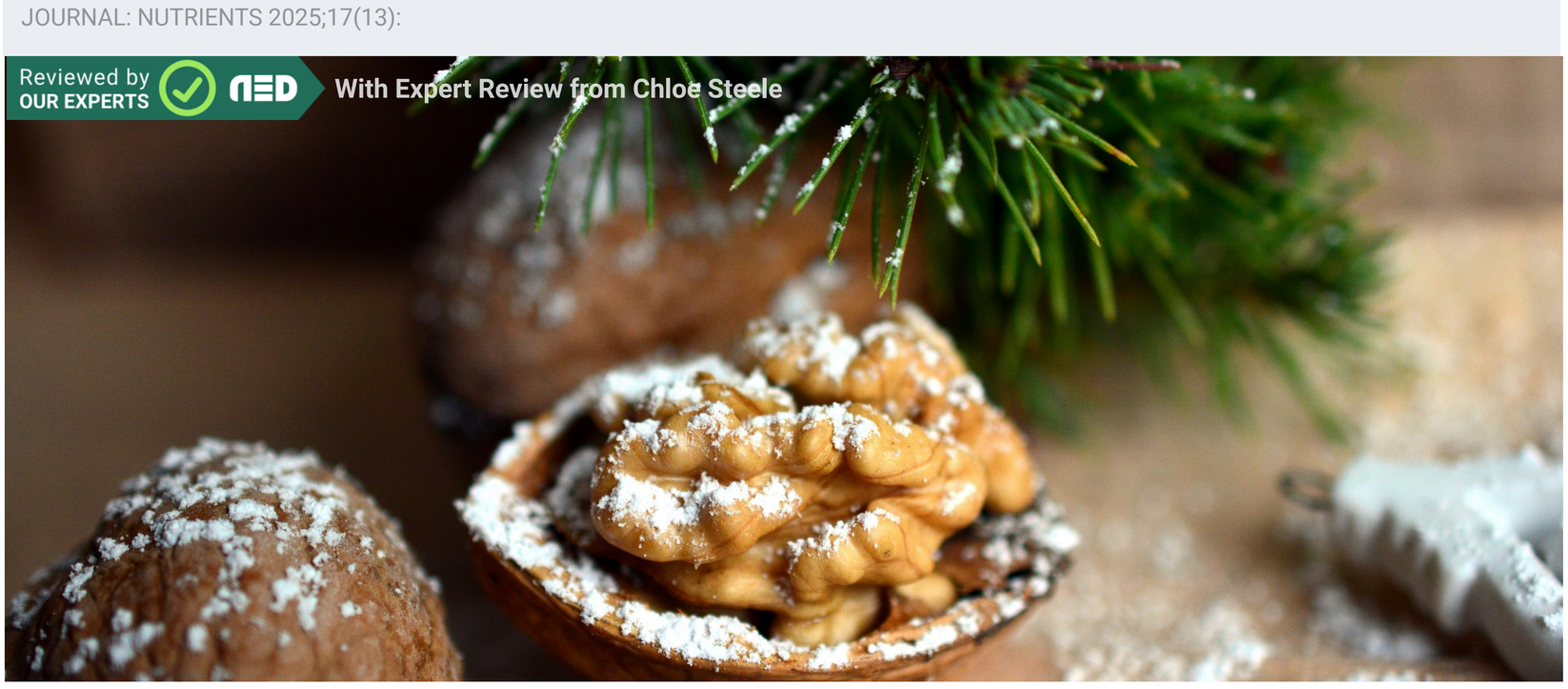
Christmas & Nutrition

Benefits of Short-Term (4-Week) Daily Walnut Consumption in Middle-Aged Adults at Risk for Metabolic Syndrome: outcomes of a Randomized Controlled Trial.

LETIȚIA MATEȘ, IONEL FIZEȘAN, ROXANA BANC, ET AL.
JOURNAL: NUTRIENTS 2025;17(13):



Walnuts are a rich source of ellagitannins, polyphenols that are metabolised by the gut microbiota into urolithins, compounds recognised for their potential anti-inflammatory and cardioprotective properties. However, whether these effects translate into measurable improvements in cardiovascular health remains uncertain.

A 4-week randomised crossover trial involving 22 adults aged 40–65 years with at least one risk factor for metabolic syndrome investigated whether consuming 45 g of walnuts daily could improve vascular inflammation and cardiometabolic health.

The findings demonstrated a statistically significant reduction in waist circumference compared with the control diet.

However, no significant improvements were observed in vascular cell adhesion molecule-1 (VCAM-1), a marker of vascular inflammation, or other cardiometabolic parameters, including blood lipids and glucose regulation.

Although modest reductions in triglycerides, total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol were observed, these were not statistically significant compared with the control group.

The findings suggest that short-term consumption of 45g of walnuts per day may influence abdominal adiposity, but evidence of broader cardiometabolic benefits remains limited and whether changes translate into clinically meaningful cardiovascular benefits is uncertain.

Polyphenol-Rich Cranberry Beverage Positively Affected Skin Health, Skin Lipids, Skin Microbiome, Inflammation, and Oxidative Stress in Women in a Randomized Controlled Trial

LINDSEY CHRISTMAN, ANNA DE BENEDETTO, ELIZABETH JOHNSON, CHRISTINA KHOO, LIWEI GU
JOURNAL: NUTRIENTS 2024;16(18):3126

Skin ageing is influenced by oxidative stress, inflammation and environmental exposures. Although dietary polyphenols have demonstrated antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, their effects on skin health, particularly skin lipids and the microbiome, remain poorly understood. This randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled crossover trial investigated whether six weeks of consuming a polyphenol-rich cranberry beverage could improve skin ageing markers and modulate skin lipids and microbiota in 22 women.

Compared with placebo, cranberry consumption significantly reduced UVB-induced erythema and improved facial and forearm skin elasticity and facial smoothness. Superoxide dismutase (SOD) activity also increased compared with placebo, while TNF-α improved compared with baseline. Several benefits were more pronounced in women over 40 years of age. Cranberry consumption also altered skin lipid composition and the abundance of specific skin microbial species and strains, although overall microbial diversity remained unchanged. The findings suggest that regular cranberry beverage consumption may offer some protection against UV-induced skin damage and support skin elasticity and antioxidant defences, particularly in women over 40.



White meat consumption and risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes: a systematic review and meta-analysis

LINNEA BÄREBRING, ERIK KRISTOFFER ARNESEN, JUTTA DIERKES, ET AL.
JOURNAL: FOOD & NUTRITION RESEARCH 2023;67():67
NA SJÖDIN,

Meat consumption in the Nordic countries is high and part of the process of updating the dietary reference values and food-based dietary guidelines, the Nordic Nutrition Recommendations 2022 project has been tasked to review several food groups. Of these, the health effects of eating white meat has been identified as an area for research. This systematic review of 23 cohort studies aimed to summarise the available evidence on white meat, cardiovascular disease (CVD), and type 2 diabetes (T2D). No significant associations were found between the intake of white meat and CVD mortality and T2D. The authors concluded that there was no beneficial or detrimental effect of the consumption of white meat for CVD mortality or T2D.

Relationship between chocolate consumption and overall and cause-specific mortality, systematic review and updated meta-analysis

BIN ZHAO, LU GAN, KAI YU, ET AL.
JOURNAL: EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF EPIDEMIOLOGY 2022;37(4):321-333

Controversy surrounding the association between chocolate and long-term mortality is ongoing. Whilst high-flavonol dark chocolate as part of a balanced diet may contribute to vasodilation, chocolate is still classified as an ultra-processed food, a group which has been associated with poorer health outcomes. This systematic review and updated meta-analysis of 27,111 Finnish men in cohort studies, aimed to determine the association between chocolate consumption and long-term mortality.
Men in the highest chocolate consumption category had a 12% lower risk of all-cause mortality, and a 13% lower risk of cardiovascular disease, which may be mediated through reduced blood pressure. However, chocolate consumption was only beneficial up to a certain point, beyond which additional consumption appeared to offer little further benefit. It was concluded that greater consumption of chocolate was inversely associated with all-cause mortality and cardiovascular disease.

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